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The Limits of Legitimation. Preconditions for Conflict Resolution by Majority Rule in the European Union

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Abstract: Expanding the domain of majority rule is widely seen as desirable for the European Union. But the functioning of majority rule depends on preconditions that are seldom taken into account. The basic precondition is that overruled minorities accept majority decisions instead of exiting the voting unit. The specific problem of applying majority rule in the European Union is that overruled minorities at the European level are majorities at the nation-state level. By distinguishing between three dimensions of conflicts – content, time and space – the article analyses under what conditions it is possible to expect minorities to accept majority decisions, thus enabling the resolution of conflict by majority rule at the European level.

Keywords: European integration, European Constitution, majority rule, European identity, legitimization problems

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Introduction

The politics of the European Union suffer from both a lack of efficiency and a deficit of democratic legitimacy. Complaints of this nature are widespread [cf. Andersen and Eliassen 1996; Scharpf 1999; Siedentop 2000], as are the expectations that by expanding the domain of majority rule the European Union will become more efficient and more democratic.

Although in sociological theory majority rule is said to have a crucial legitimising effect, as yet barely any in-depth analysis has been made of the limits to the practice of majority rule at the EU level [cf. Simmel 1950]. This is all the more remarkable considering that any attempt at agreeing a European constitution will inevitably have to deal with this problem, and the next round of discussions of the constitution and its introduction will surely have to face it. It is particularly astonishing that scholars advocating institutional approaches to European integration [cf. Bach 2006] have thus far paid little attention to the institutionalisation of majority rule.

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In this article I do not attempt to discuss the problems of applying majority rule in particular European institutions. My aim is to analyse some of the principal problems involved in the practice of majority rule that derive from tensions between the European and the nation-state level in general. My main point is that it is the practice of majority rule at the nation-state level that limits the legitimising potential of majority rule at the European level. My discussion of these limits here addresses an urgent, actual political problem and is also an attempt to integrate a classic sociological topic into the sociology of Europe.

The unanimity requirement for EU decision-making is widely perceived as an obstacle to effective government in the EU. Proposals to introduce majority rule are spurred on by expectations that it holds the potential to override veto positions and thus neutralise national egotisms and accelerate EU decision-making. In contrast to such expectations, the draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (submitted to the EU Presidency on 18 July 2003) only cautiously expands the scope of majority rule, and the final text (adopted by the heads of state of the 25 member states and the three candidates on 18 July 2005 and signed by them on 29 October 2005) addresses the matter even more cautiously [cf. Vobruba 2005: 65f.]. What can we learn from this obvious contradiction between far-reaching expectations and the cautious implementation of majority rule at the EU level? What are the basic problems of majority rule that become manifest along the way from blue print to institutionalisation?

All possible answers must draw attention to the development of the dominant conflict structures in the European Union and the institutional capacity to manage conflicts politically. Indeed, in modern society majority rule is a classic institution of political conflict regulation. Consequently, a discussion of the limits of majority rule at the European level first requires that the types of conflicts that it cannot resolve be sought out and analysed. In other words, political conflicts that overburden the capacity of majority rule represent a severe test for the social integration of European society. The conflicts I deal with in this article are chosen exactly according to this criterion: My analysis will focus on conflicts that presumably cannot be regulated by majority rule. It focuses on certain conflict lines that are likely to impede the capacity of majority rule to regulate conflict. By formulating the question in this manner, I am linking the problem of social integration to questions of institution building at the European level: on the one hand, the ability to institutionalise majority rule depends on the constellation of conflicts in Europe; on the other hand, majority rule itself is an important institutional precondition for the further integration of European society.

Outvoted minorities have to accept majority decisions. This is the crucial precondition for majority rule's capacity to regulate conflicts and thus to unfurl its legitimising potential. Therefore, the crucial question concerning the limits to legitimisation by majority rule is: Under what conditions are outvoted minorities likely to accept majority decisions? To begin I prepare my argument by offering a short outline of the relationship between democracy and majority rule and by analysing col-

lective identities and calculations of interests as two preconditions for the acceptance of majority decisions by outvoted minorities. I then point at the major lines of conflict within the emergent European society. In the next step I describe three dimensions of the conditions for the empirical acceptance of majority decisions. And finally I contrast the results to date with counter-tendencies that are likely to facilitate conflict regulation at the European level. The analysis should provide some clues for assessing the capacity of majority rule to regulate conflict at the European level.

The present state of the relationship between political subjects and the rules of decision-making at the European level is roughly as follows: Important decisions are made either outside democratic legitimacy (European Court) or by unanimity (European Council), and less important matters are decided by majority rule (European Parliament). But that is not what we are concerned with here. As I mentioned above, my aim is not to deal with the problems of majority rule within the institutional design of European institutions but to address some of the questions that precede these problems: My analysis aims at exploring the basic conditions for applying and extending majority rule successfully at the European level.

Majority rule in a democracy

Although historically majority rule predates democracy, it is only in democracies that it unleashes its ability to promote social integration. The term 'democracy' embodies the paradox of the dominion of the people by the people. This leads to the legitimation question: under what conditions are the people likely to accept the dominion of the people? And in the next step this leads to the policy-related question: How can the people govern itself? [cf. Schumpeter 1950; Held 1995: 5ff].

Majority rule is able to resolve the paradox inherent in the term 'democracy' by overcoming the seeming incompatibility between the sovereignty and the subjection of the people [cf. Vobruba 2003a], provided that outvoted minorities accept majority decisions. The crucial precondition for this acceptance is that the outvoted minority perceives itself within the context (and as part) of a unit instead of detaching itself from the majority. Translated into different theoretical language: It is crucial for the efficiency of majority rule within modern democracy that outvoted minorities not opt for a collective 'exit' but acknowledge that their 'voice' has been defeated [cf. Hirschman 1970]. Under what conditions can such acknowledgement be expected?

As a classic institutional means of finding and enforcing political decisions, majority rule lies between unanimity and command. Unanimity entails the high costs of seeking a decision but hardly any costs of its enforcement. Conversely, in the case of commands the costs of seeking a decision are low, but, under certain circumstances, the costs of enforcing it can be extremely high. In contrast to both, majority rule involves mid-range costs connected with seeking and enforcing a decision.

on. The costs tied to seeking a decision are limited because not everybody, just the majority, must agree. The limited costs of enforcing a decision result from the fact that only the outvoted minority has to be convinced to accept it. What, then, is the basic condition under which outvoted minorities will accept majority decisions? The condition, as classically formulated by Georg Simmel [1950: 240], is "that the unity of the whole must, under all circumstances, remain master over the antagonism of convictions and interests".

A sustainable European identity?

We must first analyse the social quality of what Simmel calls the 'unity of the whole'. What constitutes the social frame within which a defeated group can define itself as an outvoted minority instead of leaving the 'whole'? The traditional institutional frame is provided by the nation-state and by a collective identity tied to the nation-state. Historically, national identities developed (at least in Europe) long before the introduction of universal suffrage. At the national level the problem of the acceptance of majority decisions by outvoted minorities appeared against a background of a well-established consciousness of belonging together as a group. It emerged out of neo-absolutist political structures and pre-modern, traditional modes of thinking. Nowadays, remnants of tradition, customs, and interests combined are what stabilise national identities. In the long-term historical perspective of the structural transition from the traditional to the modern society [cf. Dux 2000], national identities can be regarded as transitional phenomena, but they are nonetheless phenomena with substantial longevity and a high capacity to absorb conflicting interests. With respect to this capacity I shall speak of a 'sustainable collective identity'. According to its logic, short-term losses resulting from solidarity with(in) a national community are acceptable as long as long-term gains prevail, such as emotional security, a certain guarantee of social order, and material advantages.

The constituting process of a collective identity in the modern age cannot rely on the remnants of pre-modern traditions. Therefore, genuinely modern collective identities cannot be constructed otherwise than by referring to interests. In the case of Europe there is empirical evidence that people's attitudes towards the EU are driven by their interests: The degree to which the EU is accepted by the public clearly increases in all member states in accordance with the respective state's net gains from EU funds [cf. Nissen 2006]. These results indicate that "utilitarian judgements, not value-related identifications, are related to the European Community. Agreement with membership in the European Union is based on cost-benefit calculations" [Lepsius 1999: 208; *author's translation*]. While carefully steering clear of culturalistic interpretations of collective identity, Habermas [1998] stressed the need for a certain degree of redistribution at the European level as lying at the core of a European identity. But there are hardly any empirical signs of the emergence of 'solidarity with foreigners'. Overcoming distributional rivalries in order to develop a sustainable collective identity [cf. Nissen 2006] is by no means specific to the Euro-

pean Union owing to its technocratic or economic bias. It only appears particular to the EU because at present European identity-building is by far the most visible process of its kind in the modern world.

As data have shown that utilitarian attitudes dominate people's views of the European Union, a common European identity must contain a willingness to accept the claims of other people – in particular concerning redistribution – within the 'whole' (in Georg Simmel's sense). To date the question whether a common European identity implies such a willingness has seldom been raised [cf. Vobruba 2000; Vobruba 2001; Nissen 2004; Mau 2005a], and it has never been linked to the question of the conditions for successfully expanding majority rule within the European Union. Given the present state of the discussion there is no way of assessing to what degree a collective European identity could be chargeable by outvoting. Presumably it is systematically impossible to make such assessments. Nonetheless, the question can also be approached in a roundabout way, as the data indicate that only a few minorities support the transfer of socio-political responsibilities from the national to the European level [cf. Mau 2005a]. The broad acceptance for postponing freedom of movement for labour following the EU's Eastern enlargement in 2004, in order to protect 'national labour' in the fifteen older EU member states [cf. Gerhards 2006], points in the same direction: It is not Europe but individual nation-states that still constitute the social unit to which collective identities refer and that therefore constitute the legitimate redistribution frame. It can thus be assumed that in its current state European identity can easily be overtaxed, in other words, that the European consciousness of mutual belonging provides only weak support for the legitimacy of majority decisions that negatively affect minority interests.

In order to extend the scope of majority rule at the European level it is not enough to rely on an already established collective identity. The application of majority rule and European identity develop simultaneously. There is therefore the remarkable but thus far barely recognised problem of the simultaneity of the development of a European identity and the application of majority rule. If it is true that regulating conflicts by majority rule is an essential part of modern democratic society, then it may be concluded that the core of the dilemma in Europe's future development is the simultaneity of its institution-building and identity-formation.

Legitimation problems

Majority rule and collective identities differ at the European and the national level in another manner. At the national level, decision-making by majority rule is routine, which substantially alleviates the burden of establishing legitimacy. But it is not the procedure as such that establishes legitimacy, thus shielding political impacts from legitimation questions. 'Legitimacy by procedure' [Luhmann 1969] only works as long as the impact of politics does not cause severe dissatisfaction, which results in the procedure itself being publicly called into question. Generally speak-

ing, there tends to be a characteristic difference between political elites and the people on the question of what a political system derives its legitimacy from. Political elites tend to understand the legitimation problem as one of adequate participation in the processes of political decision-making, and thus they take procedural issues very seriously. By contrast, people as opposed to political elites regard the legitimation problem in terms of satisfactory results and in particular as adequate provisions for material welfare. With regard to legitimacy elites orient themselves towards input-criteria, whereas people are interested in output [cf. Scharpf 1999: 21]. Consequently, depending on which of these two perspectives scholars adopt, they conceptualise legitimacy problems either as problems relating to the recognition of persons or as problems relating to the distribution of goods [cf. Habermas 1976; Vobruba 1977; Honneth 1992; Vobruba 1997: 133ff]. Only when politics seriously violate people's material interests and people are lastingly disappointed are they likely to question the rules of political procedure, that is, the input-side, but without abandoning their basic output orientation. This is why recognition motivated by morals is not a substitute for sufficient material welfare as the basis of legitimacy in modern society.

In theory and practice – in the social sciences and in politics – the question of the empirical preconditions of the acceptance of majority decisions at the national level remains implicit. But within the context of the European Union majority rule is not a matter of routine. The problem is its introduction and expansion. Decisions related to procedure are therefore constantly an explicit and prominent subject of political debate within the European Union [cf. Giscard d'Estaing 2002: 9]. Moreover, they cannot be separated from the conflicts concerning political impacts, because procedural questions are discussed in anticipation of the material outcomes that the procedures are likely to produce. In negotiations on the Treaty of Nice, for instance, Spain did not openly defend the advantages it derived from the existing distribution rules of the Cohesion Fund, but it insisted on retaining the procedures involved for changing these rules: Until 2007, any changes to these rules must be agreed unanimously and thus each EU member has a veto-position. By this means Spain succeeded in promoting its interests at the procedural level. Since in most cases it is relatively easy to anticipate the material outcomes of the procedures in question, EU member states are negotiating the expansion of majority rule not as purely a procedural issue but also in terms of the expected consequences and anticipated material results. There is all but a 'veil of ignorance' [Rawls 1971]!

Hypotheses about the acceptance of majority decisions

Georg Simmel made the famous distinction between two constellations in which majority decisions could take place. In the first constellation, the outvoted minority agrees because they would otherwise be forced to accept the majority's will, and in this case the function of the majority decision is "that the minority may convince itself that its actual resistance would be of no avail". [Simmel 1950: 242] This kind of

acceptance is not actually recognition but subjugation, owing to the absence of an exit-option. In the second constellation, the outvoted minority recognises the majority decision as a decision for the social whole. "Here, we have this seeming contradiction, which in reality, however, profoundly illuminates the relationship: that, precisely where a super-individual unit exists or is assumed, outvoting is possible; but that, where the unity is lacking, it is necessary to have unanimity, which in practice, from case to case, replaces it by actual equality." [Simmel 1950: 245] The recognition of a majority decision is only seriously in question if there is an exit-option for the outvoted minority. A majority decision passes the test of legitimacy as long as it does not result in the minority's secession.

Under what conditions can one expect that minorities are likely to accept majority decisions? [cf. Offe 1984] The doubts about the legitimising potential of majority rule can be summarised in the three dimensions of interests it involves, and therefore, I shall distinguish three conditions relating to them: the dimension of content, the dimension of time, and the dimension of space.

A. The dimension of content: Majority decisions are more likely to be accepted the more homogenous the content and strong the interests of all participants in a vote. Therefore, an outvoted minority is less likely to accept a majority decision the more the content and the intensity of its interests are at variance with the majority's interest.

B. The dimension of time: The more clearly the outvoted minority can expect that the majority decision is reversible, the more likely it is that majority decisions will be accepted. Reversibility facilitates the acceptance of a majority decision because it implies a future opportunity for the outvoted minority to become a majority. Therefore, the more plausible the expectation that a majority decision is irreversible, the less likely an outvoted minority is to accept a majority decision.

C. The dimension of space: The harder it is to permanently attribute different interests to regional differences within given borders, the more likely it is that majority decisions will be accepted. Therefore, the more minority interests are clustered within territories, the less likely the chances that majority decisions will be accepted.

The less possible it is to rely on the basic precondition that the social whole, comprising the majority and the minority, is integrated by an awareness of mutual belonging, that is, by a shared collective identity, the more important the above factors are. This precondition is particularly important for the acceptance of majority decisions within the European Union, because in the European Council, where the most important decisions are made, outvoted minorities constitute national majorities.

In this context the crucial question for determining the relevant lines of conflict in Europe is: What conflicts generate interest groups unlikely to accept majority decisions if they become outvoted minorities?

Problems involving the acceptance of majority decisions

I shall deal with the question what kind of conflicts tend to complicate the acceptance of decisions by referring to the three conditions conducive to the acceptance of the majority decisions I mentioned.

A. The dimension of content

If an outvoted minority assesses the quality and intensity of its interests as superior to the majority's interests, it is unlikely that it will accept the majority's decision. One such case is if a minority sees itself as the advocate of 'life-interests', hence claiming to pursue the 'objective interests' of everyone. Another case is when a certain issue represents a minority's existential interests while it only peripherally concerns the majority. It is not unusual to withdraw certain issues from the majority rule precisely owing to this asymmetry in the intensity of interests. For instance, a majority's decision about a minority's right to use its language would never be seen as legitimate by democratic standards. Therefore, in a nutshell, an outvoted majority's rejection of a majority decision is nothing more than their insistence on the protection of minority rights.

Such constellations tend particularly to surface along the lines of conflict between ecological interests and income or employment interests [cf. Nissen 1993]. For decades, nuclear-power plants in particular spur these kinds of conflicts [cf. Offe 1984]. Nowadays similar conflicts have been emerging at the European level: conflicts between inhabitants in the vicinity of planned highways through the Alps and cargo companies; conflicts between countries with and countries without nuclear-power plants; conflicts between interests aimed at harmonising Europe and interests aimed at maintaining national and regional diversities. Further integration and enlargement of the European Union is likely to lead to contradictory tendencies: On the one hand, it will result in a dense network of trans-regional relations, thus increasing the need for harmonisation and compromises. On the other hand, the EU is facing growing income inequality, increasing tendencies towards marginalisation and exclusion [cf. Münch 2006], thus it has to integrate a growing diversity of interests, different perceptions about the importance of the subjects of conflicts and regional specifics [cf. Drulák 2001]. All these differences are embedded in different national traditions, resulting in different interpretations of the importance of national sovereignty in different member states [cf. Heidenreich 2006a]. All these trends will lead to constellations in which outvoted minorities are unlikely to accept majority decisions at the European level.

B. The dimension of time

Basically, the line of conflict within the temporal dimension runs between diverging concepts and contradicting interests regarding the shape of the future. These con-

flicts can be deactivated if political decisions are politically reversible [cf. Gusy 1984: 70f.]. But in many cases, the reversibility of a majority decision cannot be taken for granted. Most observers and all advocates of continued European integration and enlargement perceive it as an eminent historical process. In this view, there is no room for thoughts of reversibility [cf. Milward 2002]. This is why the importance of the conflict line between interests in the status quo and advocates of further integration has thus far been overlooked. Its consequences are difficult to assess. Either outvoted minorities insist on their rejection of any step towards further integration and try to interfere in it. Or outvoted minorities can be persuaded to accept majority decisions aimed at further integration later on. But the precondition for this is the comprehensive success of the further integration and expansion of the European Union, along with the participation of the outvoted minority in this success.

The multi-level structure of the European Union, results in ambiguous motives for opposing a decision: Do people vote against the idea of further European integration or – for totally different reasons – against their national political elites? Such ambiguities of motives provide a wide range of possibilities for ex post interpretations of the results of elections, hence potentially damaging – intentionally or not – the legitimacy of majority decisions. Therefore, it is clear that by proposing an exit clause (cf. Art. I-60), the text of the European constitution is in line with the basic sociological condition for the acceptance of majority decisions. But at present, several political decisions in Europe are in sharp contrast to this requirement. There is a characteristic asymmetry concerning the reversibility of majority decisions that reduces its democratic function to absurdity: There is a tendency to treat majority decisions against further integration and enlargement as reversible as long as a positive – hence irreversible – decision appears. In the perspective of the sociology of majority rule this is an almost absurd practice. Because, given the historical significance and impact of such decisions on all members of society, it would be logical to make such decisions reversible.

In sum, as long as the process of European integration and enlargement confronts outvoted minorities with majority decisions they perceive as irreversible, there remains the danger of non-acceptance, possibly ending up in unregulated secessions. Consequently, the preconditions for successful and sustained European integration is that basic questions of further European integration and enlargement are submitted to qualified majorities and that the European Constitution is equipped with an exit option.

C. The dimension of space

In a certain sense, this dimension is situated crosswise to the former two, because minorities concerned with a dimension of content and minorities concerned with a temporal dimension can also be defined by certain territories [cf. Elkins 1995: 202ff.]. This conflict line tends to follow real or imaginary territorial borders. Its

growing importance is indicated by the increasing number of conflicts, which result in territorially based fragmentations. Most visible examples are the result of affluent regions loosening ties with poorer regions within hitherto integrated nation-states: for instance, in Italy, in Belgium, and – to a lesser degree – in Germany [cf. Vobruba 1997: 165ff.] In some cases these secessionist movements are spurred on by utilitarian calculations, in other cases they are supported by a revival of particularistic ethno-nationalist traditions [cf. Smith 1995: 51ff.].

The European Union is still characterised by nationally and regionally remarkably varied levels of economic development. In the enlargement process there are two developments that contribute to regional diversity within the EU: on the one hand, the accession of ten new members in 2004 was enough to result in an increase in economic and cultural diversity [cf. Gerhards 2005; Hölscher 2006]; on the other hand, the economic dynamics generated by the accession contribute to increasing regional income differentiation within individual member states [cf. Heidenreich 2006a; Kämpfer 2006], as well as to a popular awareness of these differences [cf. Mau 2005a]. Moreover, the European Union's politics of subsidising the development of regions and districts make such differences politically conspicuous and relevant. Majority decisions concerning questions of (re)distribution are particularly likely to involve interest groups, which belong to and identify with certain territories. We can therefore conclude that the chances of majority decisions being accepted diminish if an outvoted minority: 1) attributes a particular quality and importance to its interests and sees itself as a territorial unit, or/and 2) regards itself as a territorial unit and perceives the majority decision as irreversible.

Of course, the ultimate consequences depend on the constellations of power. Politically weak territorial minorities simply must give in to majority decisions. The more powerful outvoted minorities are – for instance because they are netto contributors to the European Union – the more likely and effective their threat of secession will be. In anticipation of such threat, the outvoting of important minorities is likely to be avoided – another offence to the less powerful minorities, and possibly another reason for them to (wish to) quit the union.

Counterbalance: multiple interests and memberships

My arguments so far have pointed to a sort of 'worst-case' scenario. I have concentrated on factors that result in the non-acceptance of majority decisions by outvoted minorities. This was necessary in order to analyse the basic problems of majority rule at the European level. Nevertheless, I shall finally collect some tendencies that can gradually mitigate these problems. The question is: are there conflict structures developing in Europe to counteract these problems relating to the acceptance of majority decisions? The problems I mentioned are the more likely to appear, the more clearly outvoted minorities evolve into stable interest groups clustered within

a specific territory. The 'flipside of the coin' is that majority rule has a good chance of unfurling its potential as a conflict regulator if stable, territorially clustered interest groups do not develop. These trends also currently exist in European society.

In order to develop this argument, I set out from the assumption that there is a multiplicity of conflict lines – crossing, overlapping, and refracting each other – developing within Europe. What therefore appears as the fragmented structure of the European conflict is caused by two main trends. On the one hand, over the course of progressive modernisation and individualisation there emerge social positions in society with multiple interests: One and the same person is interested in a secure working place and in protection of the environment, interested in earnings from capital and work, etc. [cf. Beck 1986: 121ff.; Müller 1993; Vobruba 1999]. On the other hand, the multi-level structure of the European Union contributes to the fragmentation of the European conflict constellation. This is the European version of a general tendency linked to the trans-nationalisation of society.

Different theoretical perspectives [cf. Held 1995; Luhmann 1997: 806ff.; Holz 2000] describe the increasing trans-nationalisation of society as the decreasing congruency of state borders and the boundaries of social systems. As a consequence of the decreasing congruity of social, cultural, economic and political spaces, borders of such different spaces mutually cross and overlap with one other. "As social conflicts became internal conflicts, built in a network of intersecting border structures, the chances increase of politically overcoming them." [Bös 2000: 452; *author's translation*] The results are unequivocal memberships. With the Maastricht Treaty the European Union institutionally acknowledged and thus consolidated multiple citizenships. "All citizens of the member states of the European union are now citizens of the Union as well." [Faist 2000: 231; *author's translation*]

Multiple interests and multiple citizenships influence the European conflict structure in the same way: They result in contradictions and conflicts that increasingly emerge as the dilemmas of small groups and individuals. If this development becomes dominant, it will undermine all possibilities of unequivocal personal affiliations to stable interest groups, thus reducing the chances of the formation of minorities that oppose majority decisions.

Conclusions

Future European development is vitally dependent on institution building. Institutions are particularly necessary for the regulation of conflict. Majority rule is a widely respected institutional method of regulating conflict. But, as I tried to demonstrate, the capacity of majority rule to regulate conflicts depends on social preconditions. The specific qualities of majority decisions with respect to the three dimensions of content, space and time have a crucial impact on the likelihood that minorities will accept those decisions. As European integration and enlargement progresses conflicts within all three dimensions will increase. A dilemma thus emerges

in connection with further institution building in the European Union: regulating conflicts by majority rule is just as precarious as it is necessary. It is precarious because its capacity is based on social preconditions that are anything but a certainty. It is necessary because without it the further integration of Europe will fail, owing to a lack of efficiency and a deficit of democracy. The stagnation of the institutional integration of the European Union would hinder the emergence of and identification with multiple interests and memberships, hence weaken the social preconditions for successfully applying majority rule. Thus the flipside of the dilemma of European institution building is that further institutional integration both requires and enables the expansion of majority rule within the European Union. The crucial question for further successful institution building and the expansion of majority rule at the European level will be whether the European constellation of conflicts will be dominated by multiple interests and memberships, or whether interest groups will become stabilise and thus be capable of durably resisting majority decisions.

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